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Update on Water Quality

United States Department of Agriculture

Progress Update #3, April 18, 1990

EPA, USDA Continue Cooperative Efforts

Marion Mlay, director of the Environmental Protection Agency Office of Groundwater Protection, explained aspects of EPA's groundwater policy at the April 6 meeting of the Working Group on Water Quality. She described EPA's new efforts through its Ground-Water Task Force to develop a Statement of Ground-Water Principles and a new Policy on State/Federal Relations. According to EPA's Statement of Ground Water Principles, dated January 19, 1990, the "overall goal of EPA's Ground-Water Policy is to prevent adverse effects to human health and to protect the environmental integrity of the nation's ground-water resources." Since USDA's efforts are focusing on prevention, EPA's and USDA's

philosophies are moving in the same direction.

Because prevention is far more economical in the long run than cure, EPA and USDA figure to be permanent partners in water quality activities. Already, USDA and EPA work together on the President's Water Quality Initiative through State water quality efforts, data management, and research. The agencies have exchanged staffers on long-term details. Staffers from both agencies meet frequently to exchange ideas and formulate cooperative working plans. Also, Secretary Yeutter and EPA Administrator William Reilly testified jointly on water quality before the Senate Agriculture Committee last January.

Contact: Jim Meek, OSEC, 447-5035

Revised USDA Groundwater Policy Expected Soon

The ad-hoc subcommittee for USDA groundwater policy has issued a second draft policy for comment within the Working Group. The policy is close to completion and should be available soon to supersede the current policy, as set forth in Secretary's Memorandum 9500-8

(November 9, 1987). The subcommittee is also developing recommendations for revising USDA's nonpoint source water quality policy, contained in Secretary's Memorandum 9500-7 (December 5, 1986). Contact: Pat Calvert, ES, 447-6133

SCS-ES Water Quality Meetings Held, More Scheduled

A March 13-15 meeting in Washington brought together ES and SCS water quality coordinators from each state to review USDA's water quality educational and technical assistance goals and objectives. The two agencies have also announced that regional meetings will be held at four sites

this spring and summer: Little Rock, AR, April; Providence, RI, June; Reno, NV, July; and St. Paul, MN, August. These regional meetings will focus on technology transfer and local coordination.

Contact: Pat Calvert, ES, 447-6133; George Stapleton, SCS, 447-0527

ASCS Adds Another Water Quality Special Project

ASCS has added another water quality special project to the ones already announced and highlighted in the March 30 update. The newest addition is Peacheater Creek, Adair County, Oklahoma, which

brings the total of water quality special projects to 40 for fiscal year 1990.

Contact: Ray Waggoner, ASCS, 447-5237



